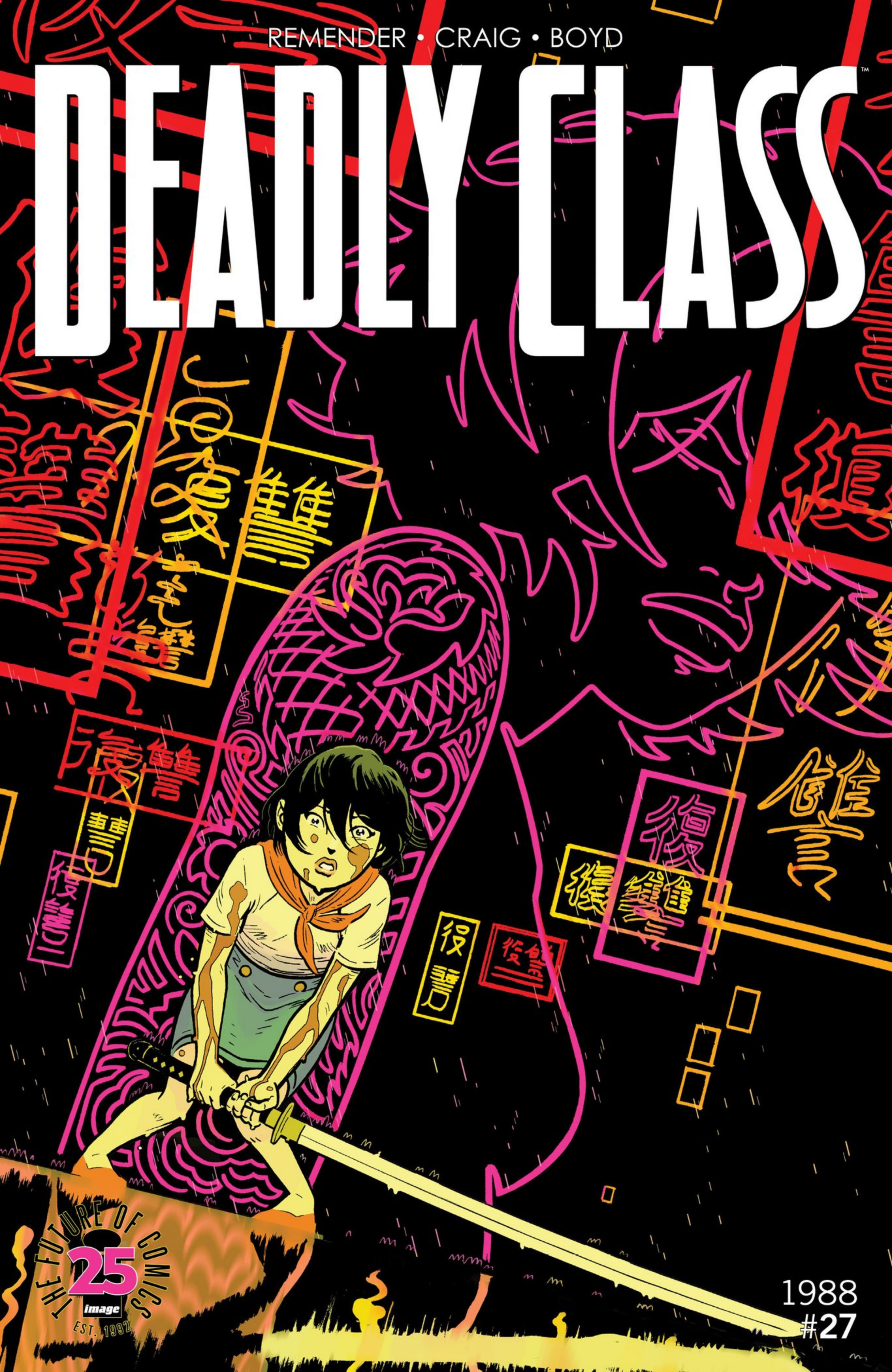


REMENDER • CRAIG • BOYD

DEADLY CLASS



THE FUTURE OF
25
image
EST. 1992

1988
#27

The Story So Far...

Saya Kuroki barely had time to wash the blood of her former ward and boyfriend, Marcus, whom she ran through with her heirloom katana during the Kings Dominion Freshman Finals, off her hands before a new crop of students enrolled in the school, eager to begin their training to become assassins.

Tasked by Headmaster Lin to take a new ward under her wing, Saya reluctantly begins mentoring Zenzele, a freshman from war-torn Ethiopia.

But on Halloween, her ward sneaks off the school grounds, and Saya tracks the wayward Zenzele; fellow freshman Quan, the Vietnamese-American rockabilly; and Helmut, the East German metalhead, to a bar in Little Tokyo.

Their fun is cut short when it turns out the bar is a front for a local Yakuza syndicate that’s loyal to Saya’s devilish brother, a Japanese crime lord who hungers for something his sister stole from him many years ago.

Saya and the freshmen barely make their escape across the rooftops. When Saya falls behind, Quan doubles back for her. But rather than giving her a helping hand, Quan gives a dozen stabs with his butterfly knife!

As Saya lies bleeding and unconscious, Quan takes her katana and hands it over to her pursuers, along with an order:

“Bring Saya to her brother...”

RICK REMENDER • Writer
WES CRAIG • Artist
JORDAN BOYD • Colorist
RUS WOOTON • Letterer
SEBASTIAN GIRNER • Editor

DEADLY CLASS created by
Rick Remender & Wes Craig

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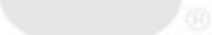
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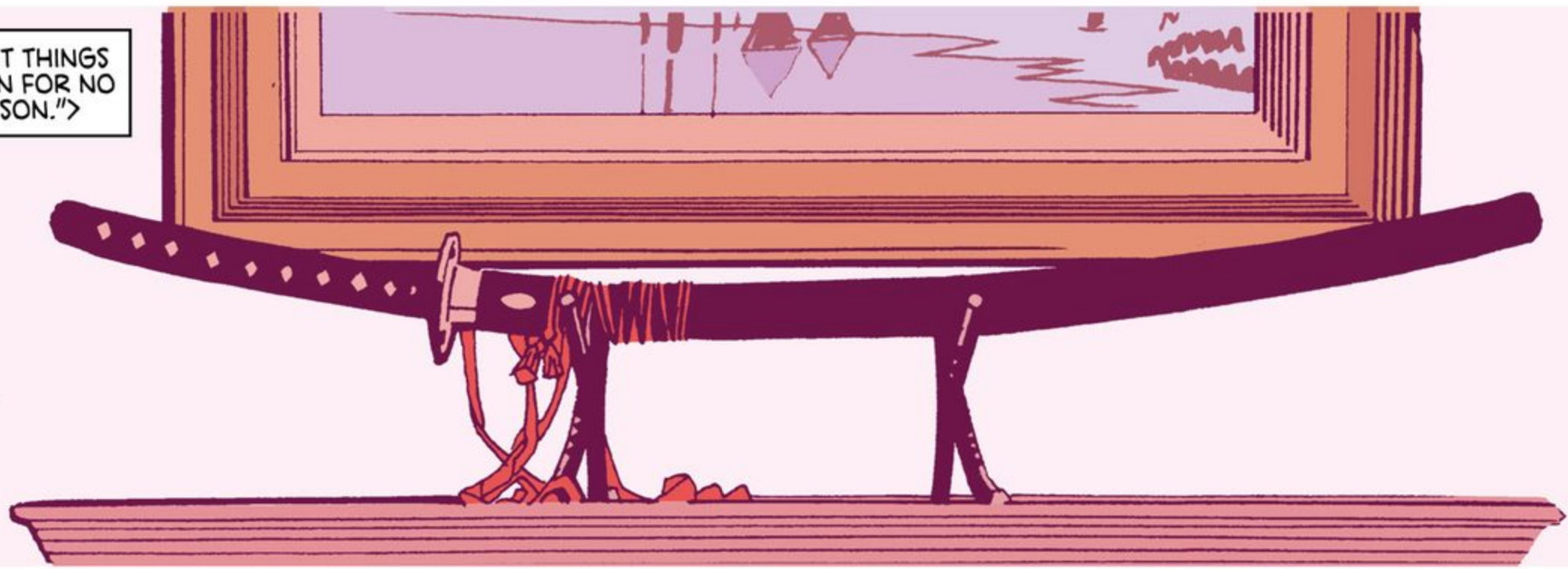
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<"MOST THINGS
HAPPEN FOR NO
REASON.">



THEY SAY
WHEN A SWORD
DRINKS
ENOUGH
BLOOD...



...IT BEGINS
TO HAVE A
SOUL OF ITS
OWN.



IT EVEN BECOMES
BLOODTHIRSTY.

YOUR GREAT-
GREAT-GREAT-
GRANDMOTHER
WIELDED THE KATANA
AFTER HER HUSBAND
WAS KILLED IN
A SIEGE,
SAYA.

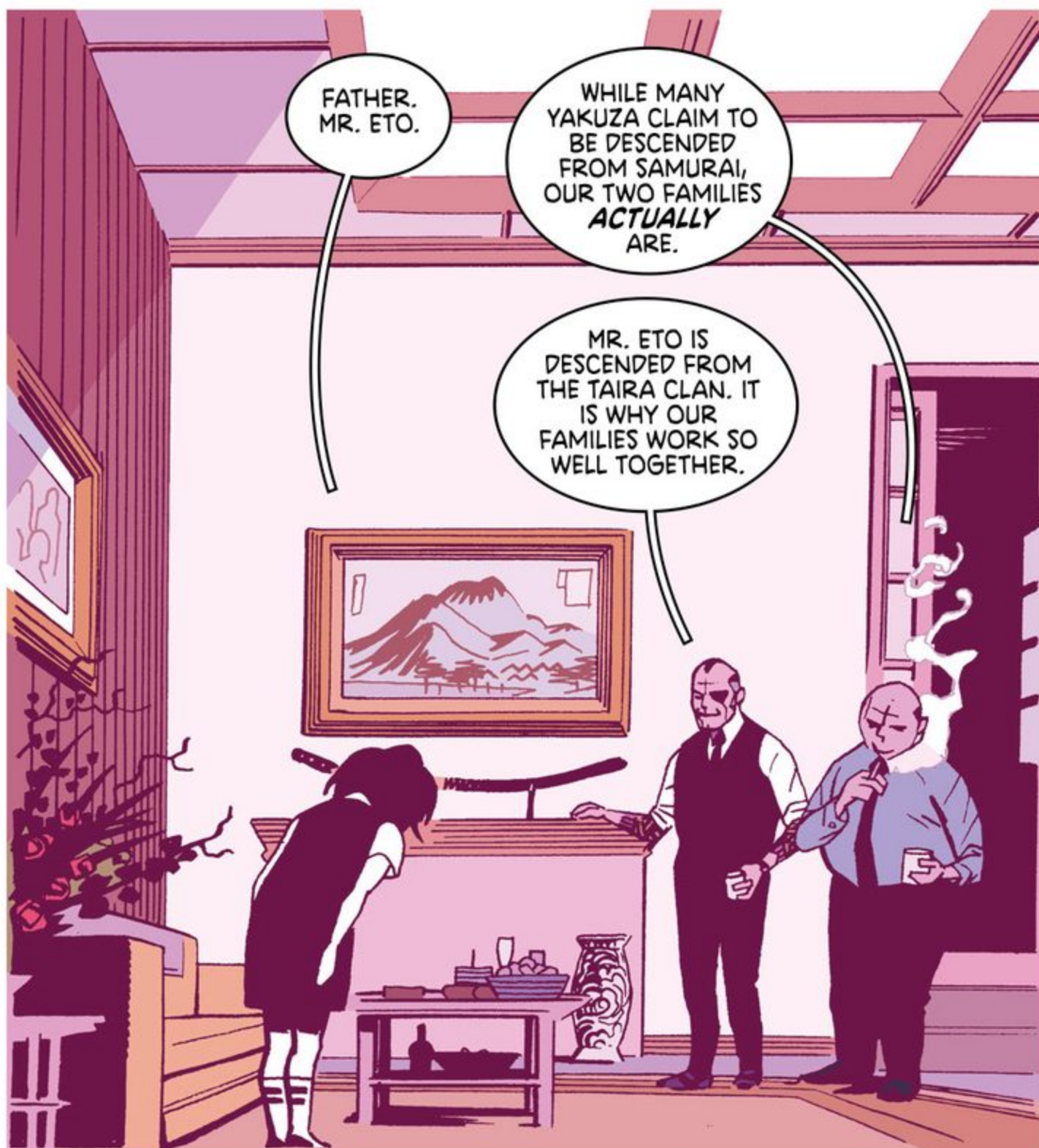
IT IS **YOUR**
LEGACY.



FATHER.
MR. ETO.

WHILE MANY
YAKUZA CLAIM TO
BE DESCENDED
FROM SAMURAI,
OUR TWO FAMILIES
ACTUALLY
ARE.

MR. ETO IS
DESCENDED FROM
THE TAIRA CLAN. IT
IS WHY OUR
FAMILIES WORK SO
WELL TOGETHER.



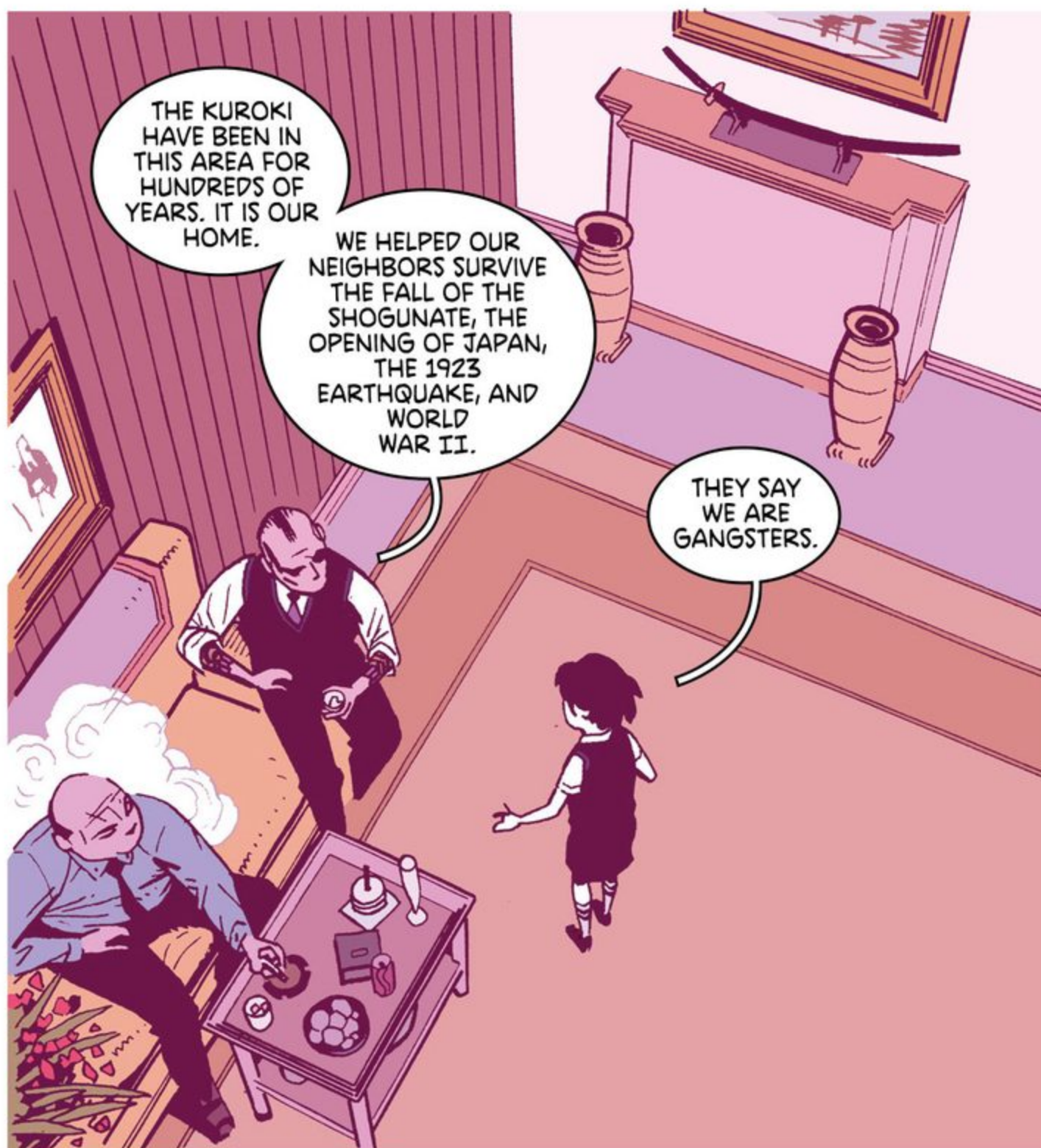
BUT
THE YAKUZA
BEGAN AS CON
ARTISTS AND
RACKETEERS FROM
THE LOWEST
SOCIAL
CLASSES...



WE BECAME
MUCH
MORE, DEAR
GIRL.

YAKUZA IS A
PART OF THE
FABRIC OF EVERY
NEIGHBORHOOD.





THE KUROKI
HAVE BEEN IN
THIS AREA FOR
HUNDREDS OF
YEARS. IT IS OUR
HOME.

WE HELPED OUR
NEIGHBORS SURVIVE
THE FALL OF THE
SHOGUNATE, THE
OPENING OF JAPAN,
THE 1923
EARTHQUAKE, AND
WORLD
WAR II.

THEY SAY
WE ARE
GANGSTERS.



WE **ARE**.
YET WE CARE
ABOUT THE
PEOPLE, AS DID
ALL **TRUE**
SAMURAI.

WE PROTECT
THE CITIZENS
AND ACT AS THE
POLICE OF THE
NEIGHBORHOOD

AMONG
OTHER
THINGS.



YOU
KEEP THE
GOVERNMENT
CROOKS IN
CHECK.

BUT DO NOT
ROMANTICIZE
THIS.

WE ARE
VICIOUS
WHEN
NEEDED.



WE **ARE**
CRIMINALS,
SAYA.

EVERYONE
HAS TO
MAKE
MONEY.



YES.

PEOPLE
WILL GAMBLE,
PEOPLE WILL
FIGHT, PEOPLE
WILL... WELL, DO
MANY SEEDY
THINGS.



WE CREATE
SAFE HAVENS
FOR DARKER
IMPULSES.

WE KEEP IT
CONTAINED.

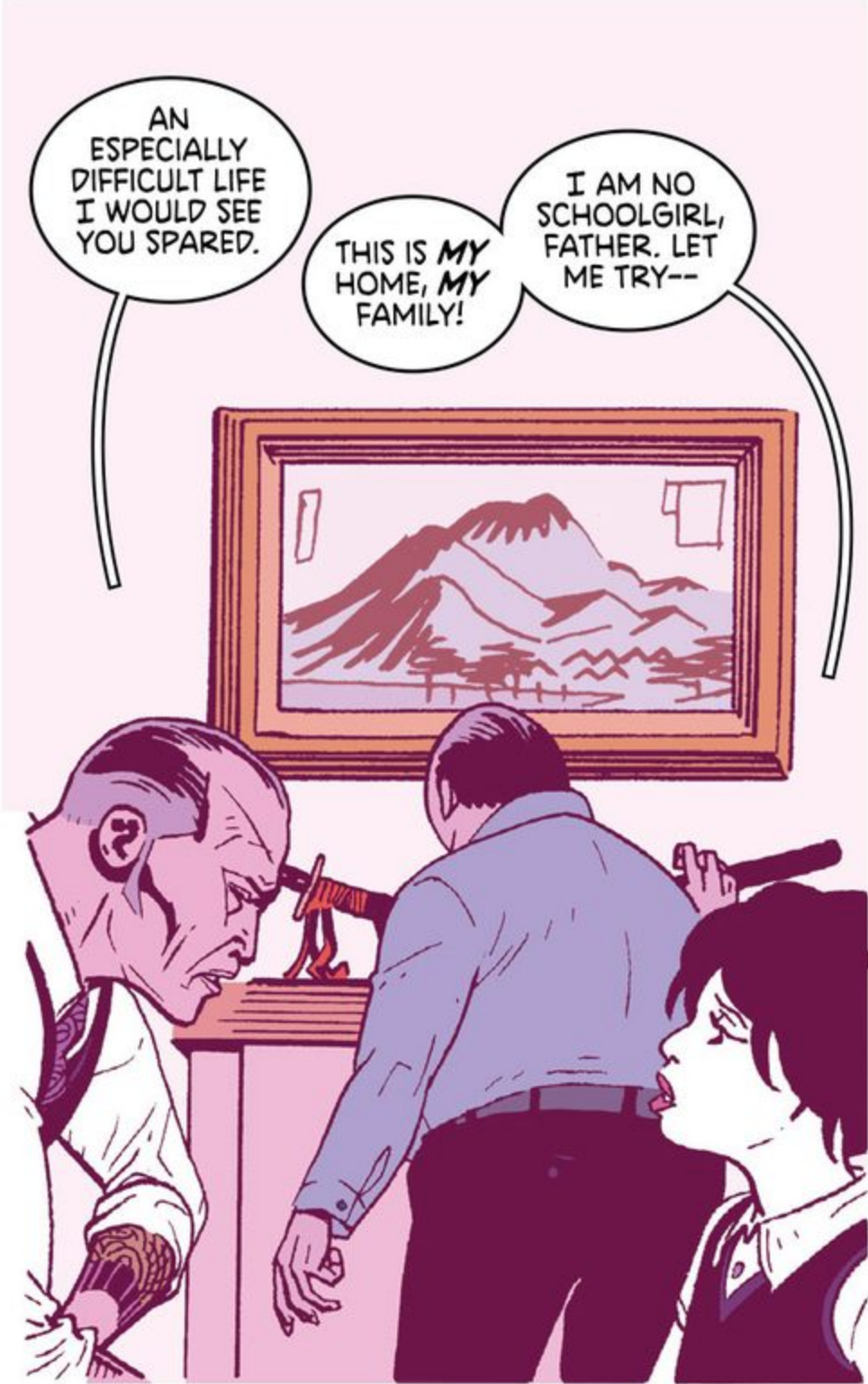
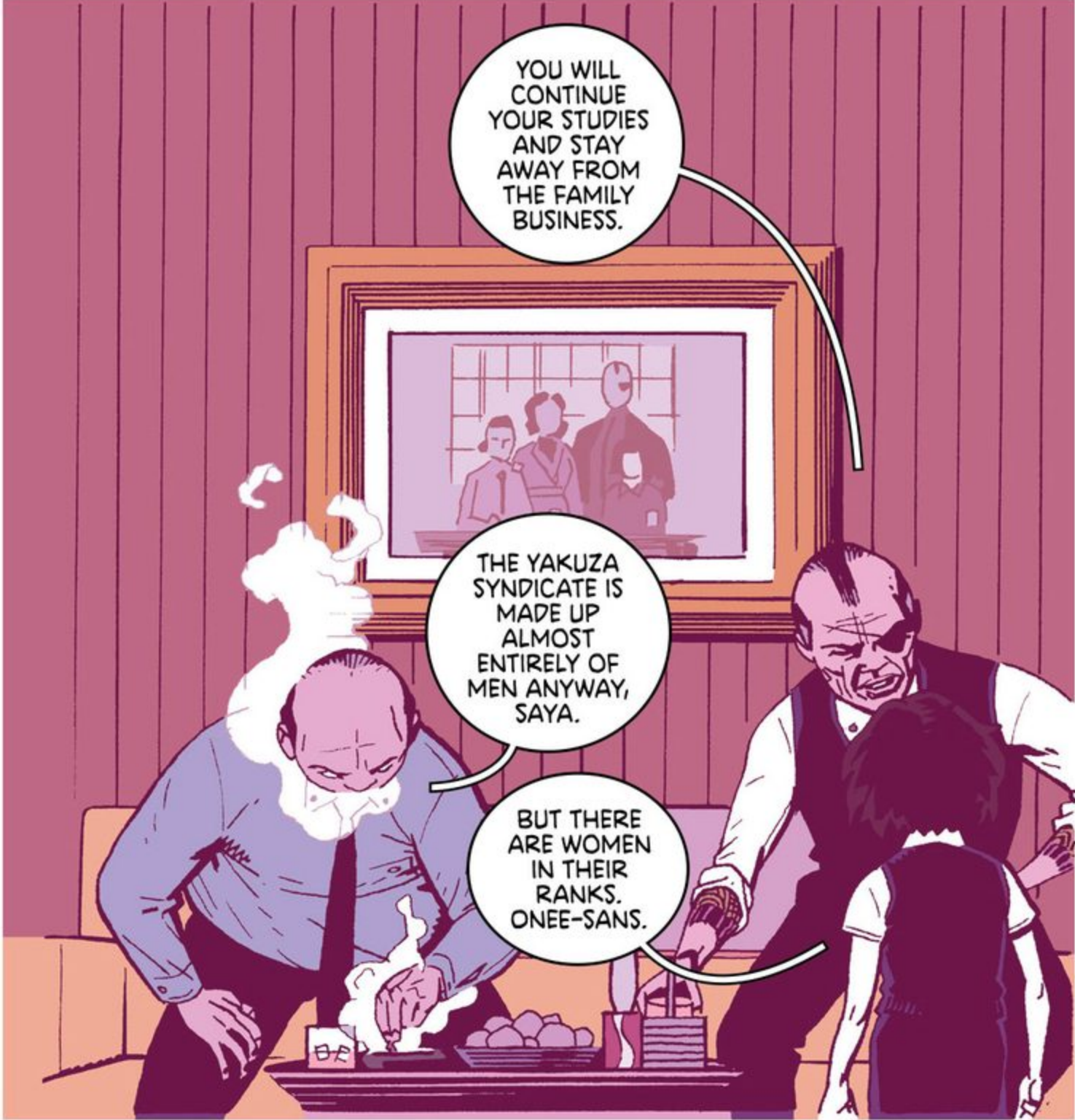
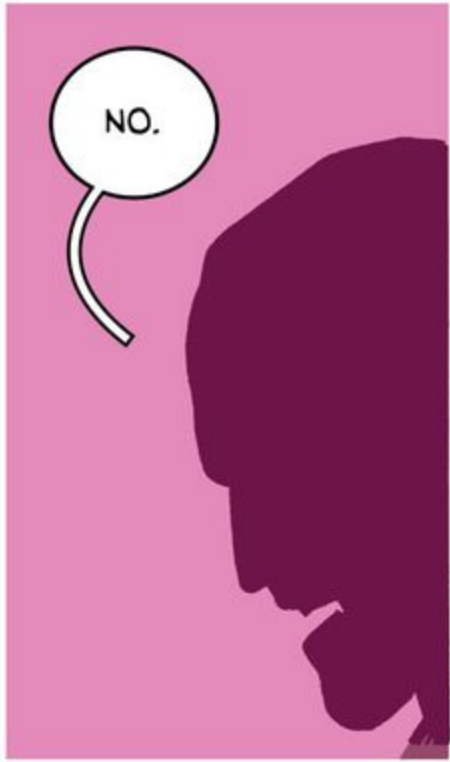
SHELTER THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
FROM IT.



I'M OLD
ENOUGH TO
HELP,
FATHER.

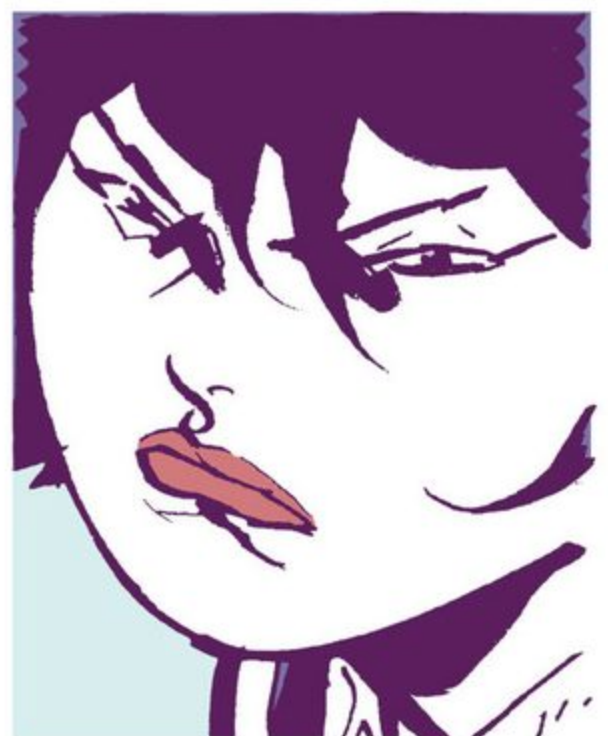
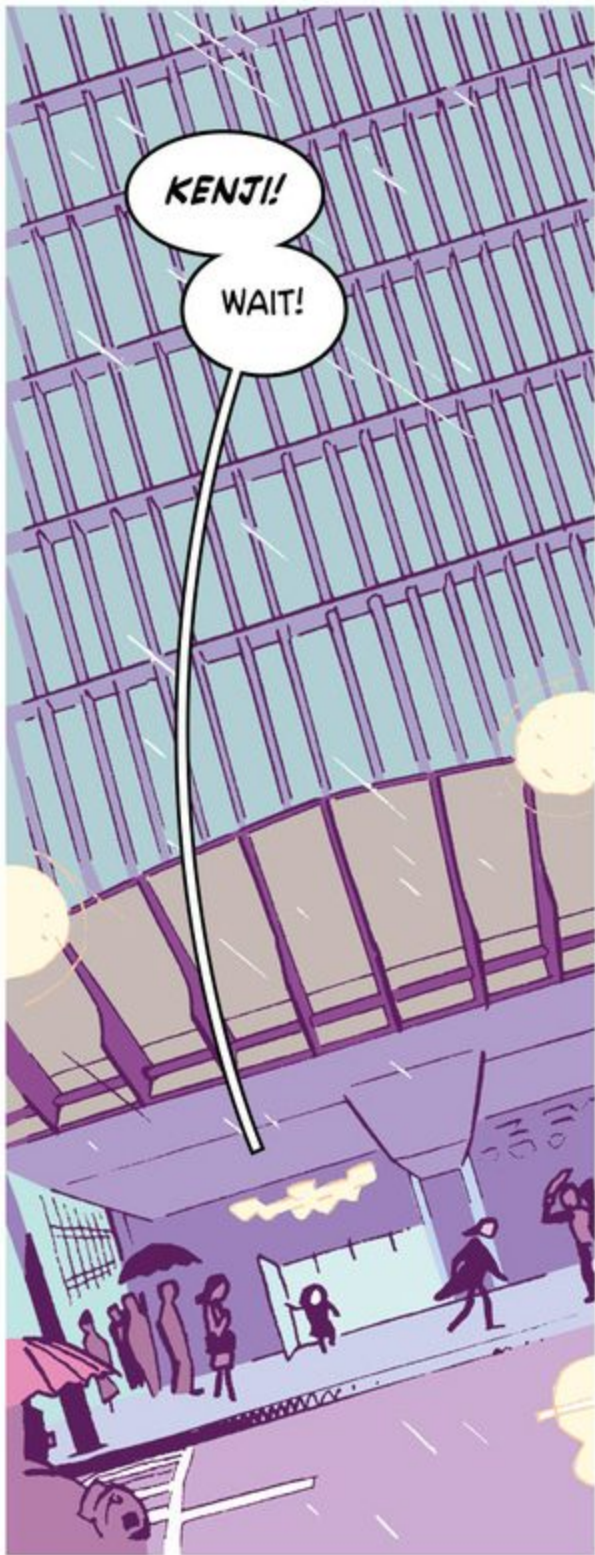
LET ME PROVE
IT. SEND ME TO
TRAIN AT THE
REAL SCHOOL.
I'LL MAKE YOU
PROUD.

MY
EMIKO...











"HOT SAKE
AND HOT
WOMEN--"



--MY
FRIENDS,
WHAT MORE
COULD A
SAMURAI
WANT?

LET'S GET
THINGS
STARTED!



UH, THE
SEAT ISN'T
FOR YOU.

C'MON,
KENJI.

WE ALL
KNOW YOU
CAN'T
FOOT THE
BILL.



HOW MUCH DO
YOU OWE US
FROM THE LAST
TIME?

A FRACTION
OF WHAT
YOU SPEND.

WHY DO
YOU NEED TO
PROVE YOURSELF
BY WASTING
YOUR MONEY,
AKIO?



SO, THAT
BEAUTIFUL WOMEN
WILL PARTY WITH
ME AND THEN
FUCK ME! ISN'T
THAT CLEAR?

CAN WE GET
SOME MORE
SAKE OVER
HERE?!



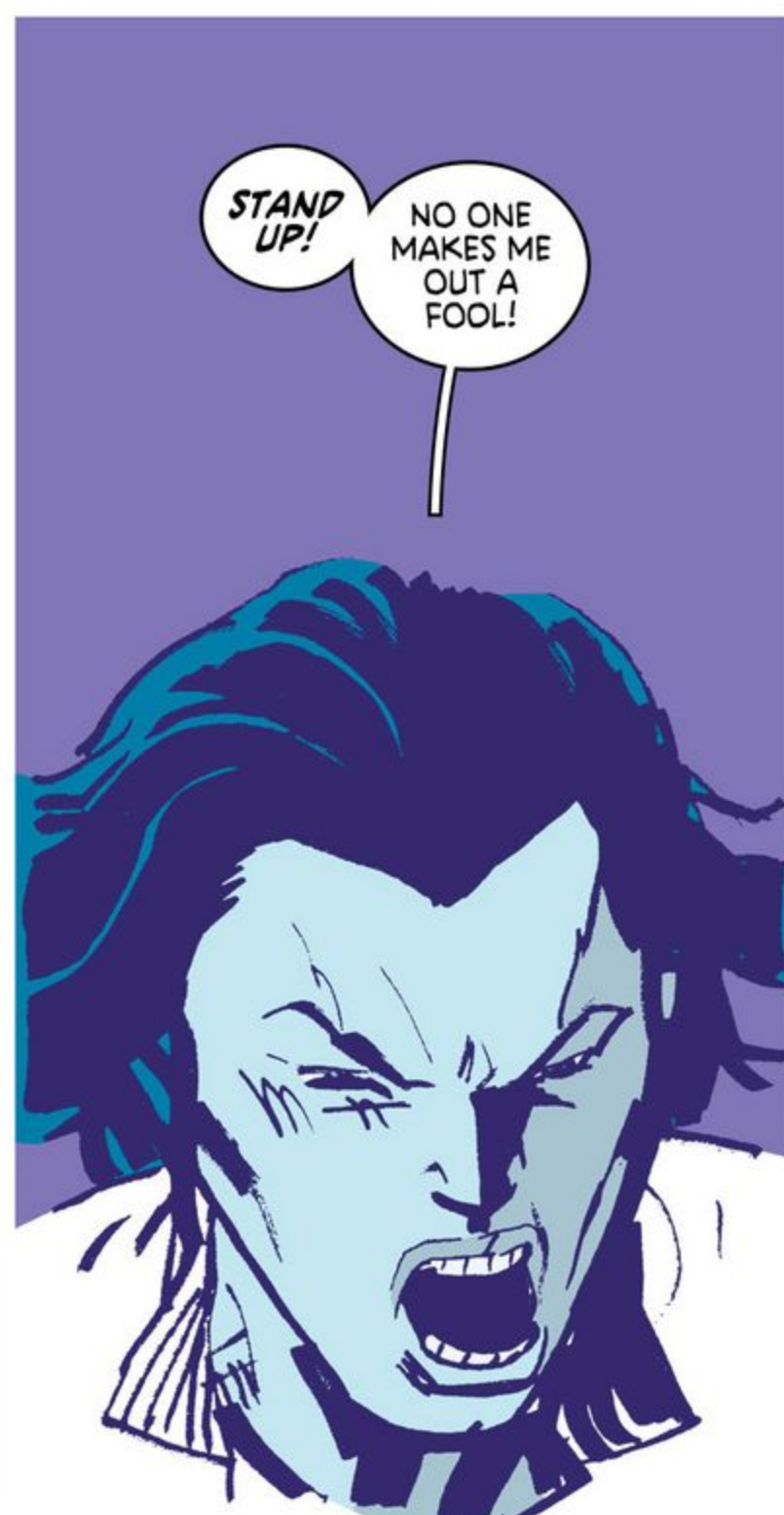
PATHETIC!

NOT ALL
OF US HAVE TO
PAY FOR A
WOMAN'S
AFFECTION!



BUT IT'S SO
MUCH
EASIER.

AND I HAVE
SO MUCH
MONEY I DO
NOT GIVE THE
SLIGHTEST
FUCK!





HE
ALREADY
DID,
KENJI.

GETTING
MAD AT HIM
DOESN'T
REALLY UNDO
THAT.



THE
FUCK,
SAYAZ?!

THIS ISN'T
AN OPEN
TABLE,
GIRL.



YOU WOULDN'T
KNOW WHAT TO
DO HERE.

NO?!



ALL
RIGHT,
LITTLE
GIRL.

I DON'T
THINK WE
HAVE WHAT
YOU'RE
LOOKING
FOR--



HEY,
RED!

I'VE GOT
AN OPEN
SEAT
HERE.

SNAP!



CAN WE SKIP TO THE
PART WHERE YOU
TAKE MY MONEY
AND YOUR GIRL
STARTS POURING
DRINKS?



HOW?!

LOOK
AT THIS
SHIT!

GUESS NOT ALL
THE KUROKI ARE
SPINELESS.



WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?!



I RUN A GAMBLING RING AT SCHOOL.



THE *SOFT* SCHOOL FATHER SENDS ME TO TO KEEP ME AWAY FROM FAMILY BUSINESS.



FULL OF *SOFT*, RICH KIDS LIKE YOU, BROTHER.



HA!

SAYA IS A BETTER EARNER THAN KENJI AND SHE'S NOT EVEN ALLOWED INTO THE CLAN!



SO, YOU WANT TO BE YAKUZA, ONEE-CHAN?



I AM YAKUZA.

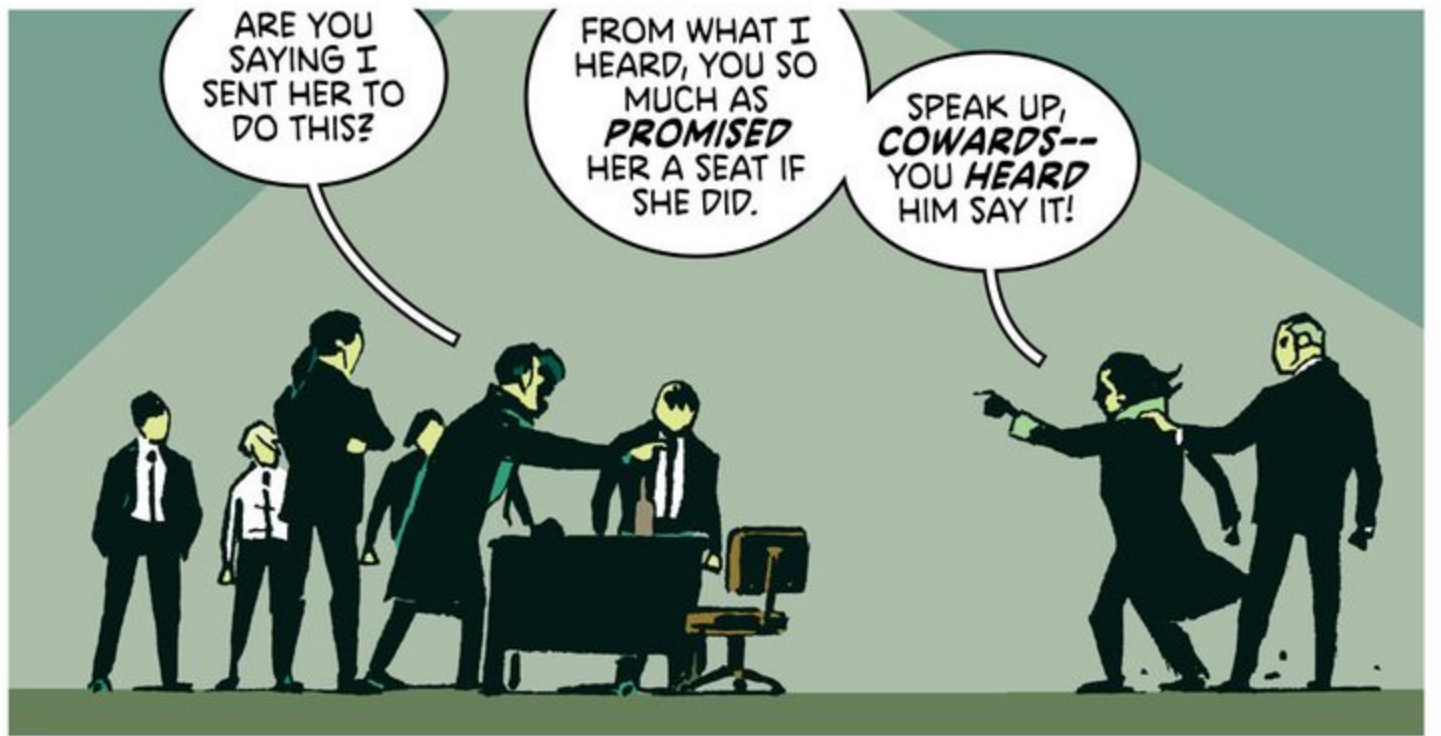


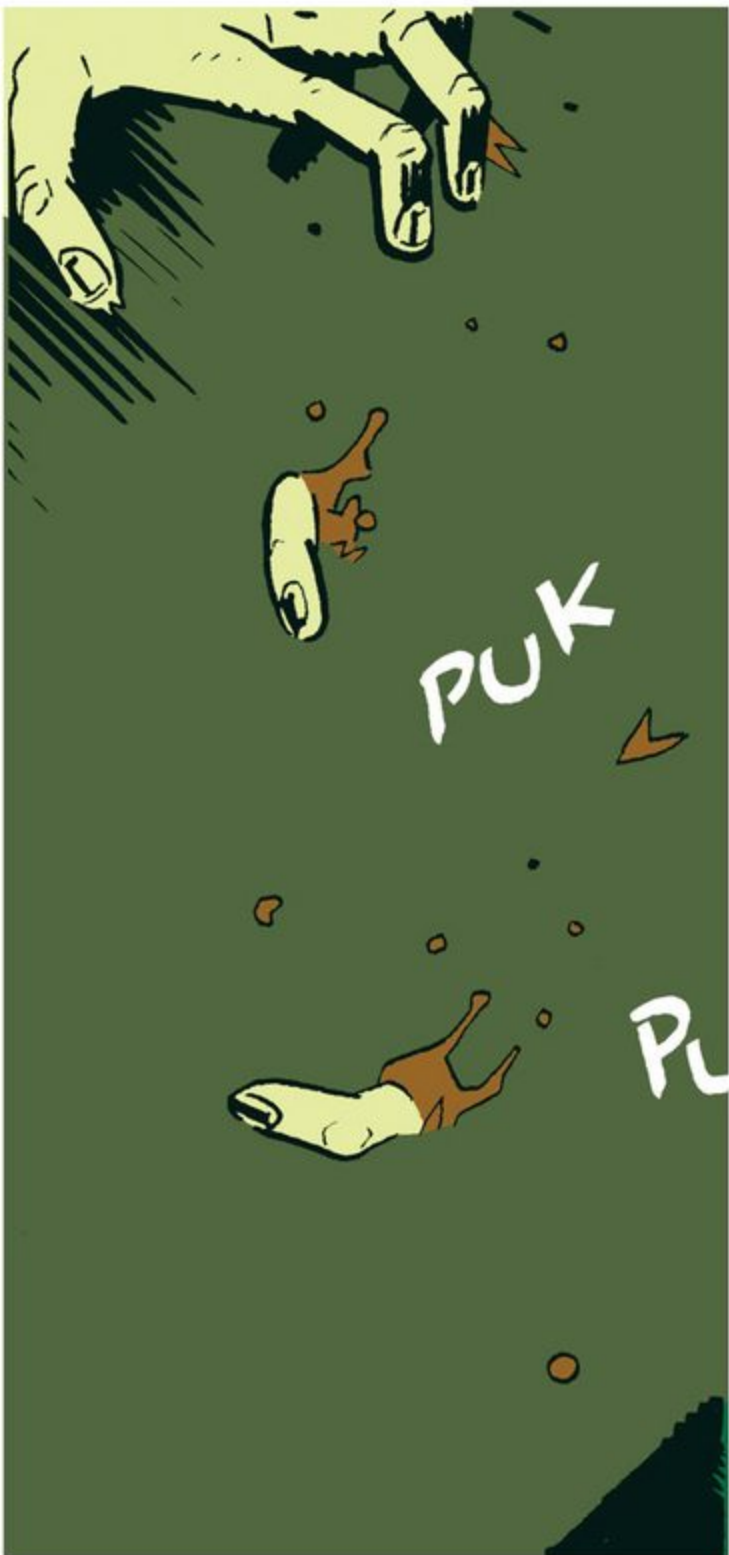
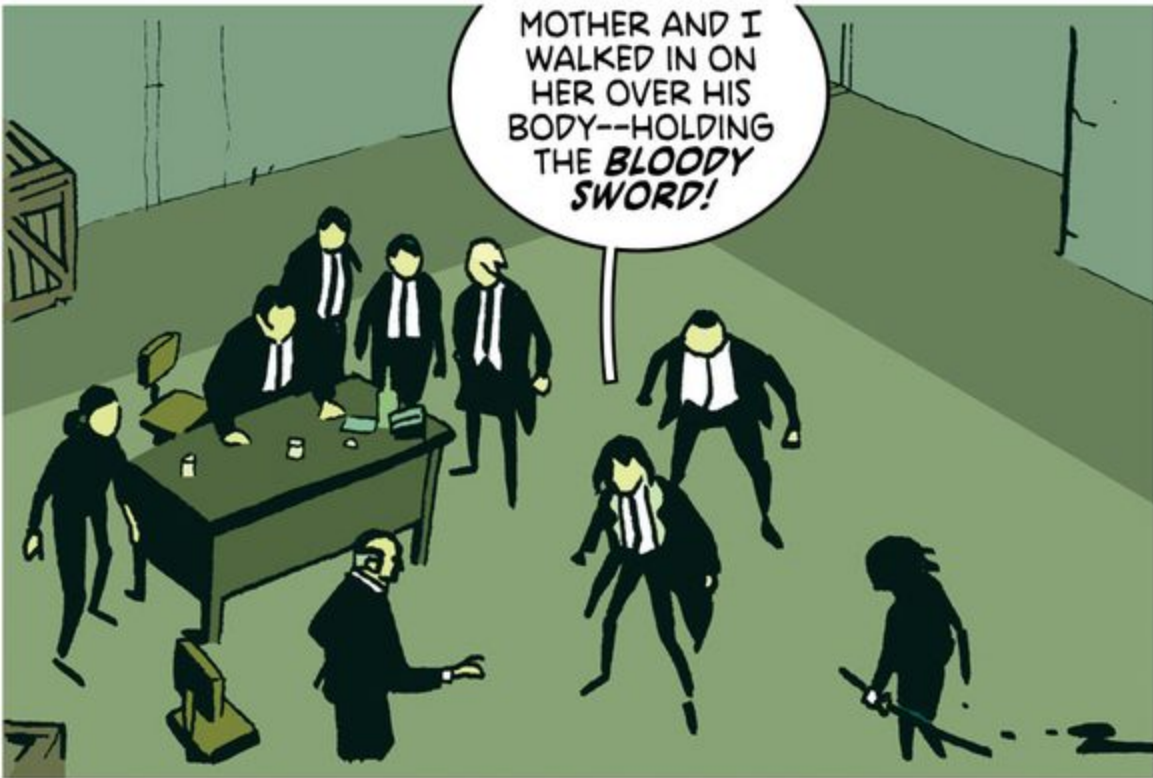
THEN LET'S GO GET YOU FITTED FOR A SUIT.

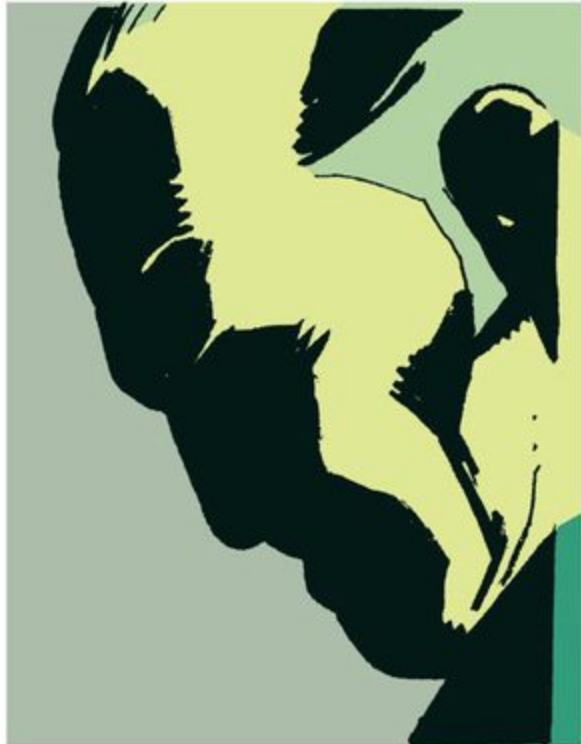






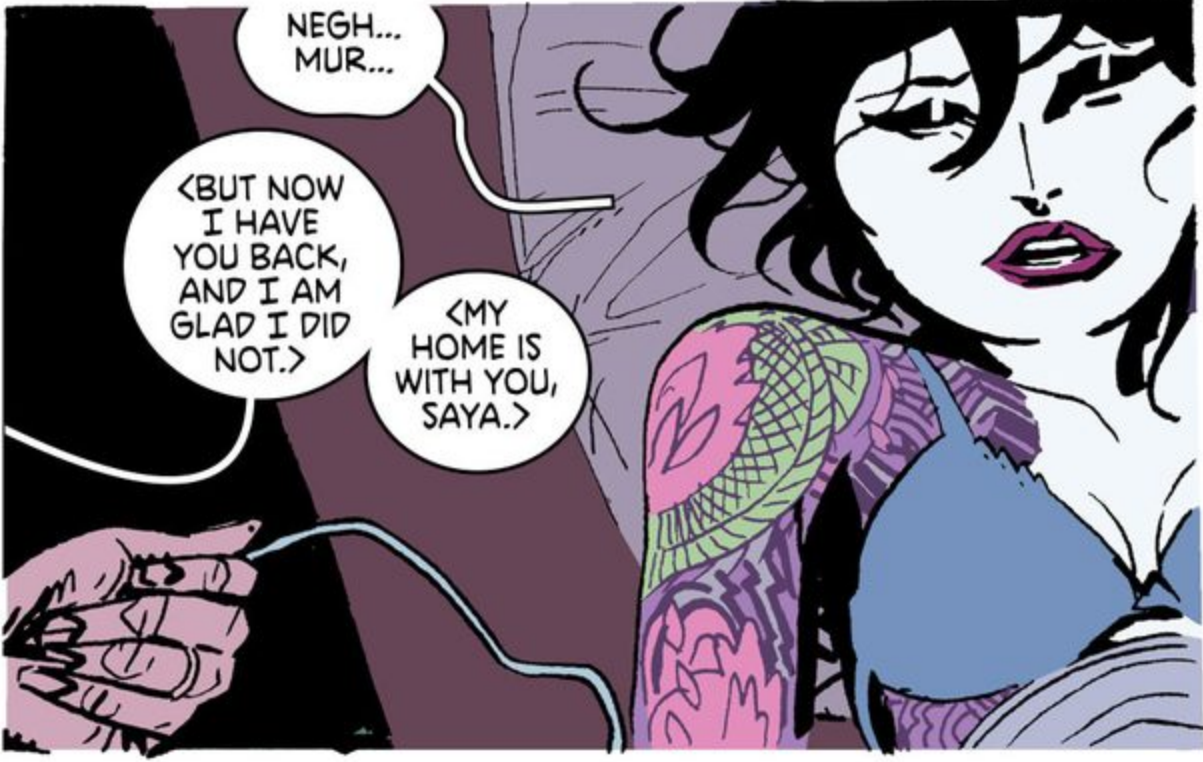












DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Send comments and questions to
[WriteRemender@gmail.com!](mailto:WriteRemender@gmail.com)
Mark letters "OK to print".

A lot is happening with our classmates right now, and it's led to tons of reactions from our loyal readers. Let's see what you've been saying!

Dear DEADLY CLASS TEAM

...sounds very weird to me, but since normal people start letters this way, I figured I'd give it a try. Saying I'm a big fan of this book does it absolutely zero justice, like casually saying H2O's not that bad, basically almost my entire reason for living. I swear to God it's like you guys have no idea how truly amazing DEADLY CLASS is, it's too big to describe in words. I read every letter section at the end of each chapter, and I see people try to tell you how great you guys are and how great the comic is. They use literate words that would probably mean something fancy and cool if I ever bothered to check them, but I don't think people fully understand. It should terrify you how amazing DEADLY CLASS is; wait, does it... Scare you? 'Cuz it really should. You want proof? I'm Nigerian. I'm in Nigeria right now, where men don't cry, and reading comics, manga or anything fun makes you immature. My "cool" friends think a nineteen-year-old choosing comic books and weed over sports and going out is very unnatural, I'm defying all the stereotypes I love so much, and it's this book's fault.

I'm glad I finally wrote, should have done it immediately after the Vegas acid trip, Marcus' last words there made me cry. I wish I knew fancy words, so I could also tell you guys how much this book means to me. Marcus and Grant from BLACK SCIENCE are probably dimensional soul brothers. He was such a trip for me, emotionally frustrated and so scarred both inside and out. For me, it was like you drew a mirror and put it on every page. He portrayed every teen's deep down desire to feel wanted and needed but also left alone. That masochist self that keeps on going back, letting people in, expecting a different result and then pushing everyone out when it goes -in the words of Lex- "tits up," but knowing that we'd probably do it again. Dude was so fragile, which I now understand is not the same as being weak.

I think starting with a "Dear DEADLY CLASS TEAM" is weird for me because I feel like I'm really close with you guys. It's not possible to read and see the heart you guys pour into your work without it not feeling personal. That kind of honesty can be hard to pull off. I love every character from the old to the new ones. Thank you for Zenzele by the way. (African love and all that) Wes, you're the man! Thank you for all you do, accurately drawing out the thoughts of someone like Rick must take an insane genius. I honestly don't know how you do it. Also, my favourite character was Willie till you killed him off, I love Marcus and can talk about him for ages, but Willie was tough to look at. Where I'm from, you're supposed to be hard and hold stuff in cus everyone has their own shit and no one wants to deal with yours. While Marcus had issues, he found ways and people he could share his dark secrets with. Willie didn't have that for a longer time than Marcus, and even in the end, we find out its way worse than we thought. So, thank you for that and thank you for making it past the "I'm Nigerian..." part of my letter without running. I'd have started with that, but those emails rarely go over well with people.

How's hate mail from the TV series thing going? You've got very emotional fans, but even still, that's what makes DEADLY CLASS so great, the fact that you guys aren't the only ones on this ride. Maybe you guys haven't noticed yet, but most of DEADLY CLASS readers aren't just comic fans looking for something good. There's no way we'd stick around if we didn't feel like we shared something with either yours or a character's view of life. You speak to our inner turmoil, the things we're scared to admit. So, wanting to continue to do that on a much larger scale... I get it. First moment I picked up DEADLY CLASS I told myself I wasn't going to tell anyone of my few comic loving friends about it, but then I saw that part that killed me, Marcus saying he found himself suddenly wanting to live in a place surrounded by death... Heavy stuff. I showed everyone! Unfortunately, the only person who got it was my sister who reads a lot of Sherrilyn Kenyon. My friends just turned it into a debate on how manga is better than indie comics... (Getting off topic)

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is I don't think you trying to show something that you care about to the world makes you a sellout, whether it's a TV adaptation or a movie... or telling your friends that you stopped reading Kingdom because some dude named Rick knows how to write pain. So, I wish you the best on the show, and I really hope it gets picked up. Can't wait to see what madness you bring to it.

From the other side of the ocean, a huge fan wishing you lots of luck pronouncing his name...

Olaleye Ayo,
Lagos, Nigeria

You are the kind of Nigerian Prince I'd gladly give my bank account information to. It takes a lot of effort to sit down and put that much time into such a thoughtful letter, and we really appreciate it. One of the traits you must adopt when you become a writer or artist is to put your head down and get used to the isolation. You have to shed the need for validation from external sources and just do the work. But every once in a while, from some corner of the globe, you might get a letter like this that really helps you to take a minute and feel good about the book, and the wonderfully thoughtful fans who have gathered to it.

Hi, Mr. Remender,

I just wanted to say thank you for such amazing story as DEADLY CLASS. The comic book store I go to in Manhattan, New York recommended me this series and I never regret reading it. Thanks to you and your team this series has earned a special place in my heart. I fell in love with characters like Marcus, Maria, Saya (although I was very suspicious of her at the beginning of the series) and surprisingly Brandy Lynn.

Sometimes I wonder if that weird of me to like her character because she is a southern racist girl and I'm from Harlem, New York, but it is her personality I find interesting and attractive. Thank you for issue #26 because I was blown away by Marcus and Maria still being alive, I mean wow what

a secret you guy kept hidden for so long.

I have two questions for you, what inspired you to write a story like DEADLY CLASS and would you prefer to see DEADLY CLASS as a television series or as a movie?

PS: Is it weird for me to have an attraction for Brandy Lynn? Do you think she is capable of siding with Saya and the others in the near future?

Emmanuel Boyd

You have strange taste in women. Brandy is very cute, but she’s also a domineering Nazi, which I imagine would make life with her somewhat unpleasant. But we’ll be seeing plenty of her coming up.

To answer your question, the book was primarily inspired by a desire to explore a lot of the social dynamics I encountered during high school. That and the emotional intensity of that age coupled with the high stakes of a school for young assassins-in-training seemed like a recipe for fun.

And I’m actually in the middle of writing the TV pilot right now. Fingers crossed that the gods of fate are smiling down on us and we make it onto the air.

Damn!

You guys Usual Suspects the crap out of this Arc! What a showstopper of a read. Start to finish full throttle action! Hey, Rick, what soundtrack would’ve been playing in the background as Marcus went through devastating people to get to Maria?? (Maybe Ring of Fire by Johnny Cash or Social Distortions rendition of it).

I had to re-read the comic to make sure it wasn’t a dream sequence, haha. I especially enjoyed all the tweets you guys got. Here are a few of them: “Holy Shit,” “I’m in a glass case of emotions,” “today’s DEADLY CLASS was just another level,” and my favorite “My mind. It is blown”

It will be interesting to see how things play out in that Bermuda Triangle thing called love/friendship between Saya, Maria, and

Marcus. I’m also beyond ecstatic to see that Marcus and Maria are back. I don’t like to get into the political, religious, or ethnicity views... but your comic is what we needed as a whole. The diversity you guys put on paper gives many kids and older kids alike the hope/realization that anyone can be a protagonist no matter where you came from or what dysfunctions/baggage you come with. So stoked to see some characters that are original and created for ALL of us.

On another note, any hints or picks on who you would like to see cast in DEADLY CLASS small screen adaptation?

Thanks!
-Carlos V

It felt good to write the return of Marcus and Maria. It was a hard decision, though. I had two outlines written, and I had gone back and forth repeatedly on which way to go. Maria was going to come back in both. Then in one outline, I kept Marcus dead, and in the other one, I brought him back. To make the decision, I literally had to write both outlines and see what each of them did. Once I had done that, I negotiated it with Wes, and I negotiated with our editor, Sebastian Girner. I also spent a lot of time talking with my screenwriting partner on the DEADLY CLASS TV show, Miles Feldsott. Miles was very passionate about the return of Marcus. His passion and the other debates convinced me to go the road where Marcus comes back, and I think we made the right decision.

God bless you Rick Remender.
God bless you.

I just put down DEADLY CLASS #26 as you can probably guess, and I’m speechless. I wrote in to you all a while back (thank you for publishing my letter! That was awesome), and I bravely defended your choice to kill off Marcus. I defended it, but in my heart, I loathed the decision. I told friends of mine not to worry, Rick’s got a plan. It’ll all work out. There’s a plan... right? For real you had me on this one. I was certain Marcus was not coming back, and it was a damn shame too because he never got to redeem himself in my mind.

He never got to be there for Maria, I mean he really screwed her over, and she is the only one who truly seemed to love Marco.

This issue is a dream come true. I sometimes find myself fantasizing about my favorite series (with me as the hero of course) and changing things that happened. Tweaking decisions and endings for a more satisfying outcome. Marco doesn’t throw the bag of groceries at Alana, Coach Boss never picks up the tree limb and gets it shoved up his ass instead, Jesse Custer doesn’t trust Cassady for a final time (you get the idea). Well good, sir you managed to take my day dreams for Marcus and Maria, make ‘em 100 times better, and bring them to fucking reality.

Ah, man I can’t even. For real this could mean so many things. Does Saya know? She must, right? The school must not know, I hope at least for her sake, and I’m sure Marcus and Maria will have some plans of their own now. To the team at DEADLY CLASS, I wanna say thank you. You’ve made this fanboy (who’s dealing with a lot of stupid real life shit) very happy this afternoon. Thanks for taking my mind off this crazy life for a few hours. Go team, Maria!!!

Taylor C.

Team Maria are going to be happy...for a little bit, anyway. It was nice to see the reaction people had when the book came out. I think it came out at a time when there wasn’t a whole lot of good news, and DEADLY CLASS, in particular, is not always the most cheerful book. Our loyal readers, who have been passionate about the series, stuck with us, and turned our book into such a hit, needed some good news, especially since we have taken things down into the depths of darkness quite a few times so far.

Dear Rick and Wes

Re: DEADLY CLASS #26--HOLY SHIT!!!!!! You guys pull off one of the best “returns” ever! Seriously, Rick and Wes, you’re the best one in twisting many readers/fans’ emotional investments EVER! I first read you during your Punisher years, alongside with “kababayan” Jerome Opena, which I love how you put Frank

Castle to the grinder, literally and figuratively. Then shifted to your most epic run in mainstream ever, Uncanny X-Force, which I really laughed out loud on your take on Deadpool (feeding Warren with his own meat and his relationship with Evan). And with the BEST Venom run EVER, especially when my fave artist Lan Medina came as penciler (he said you're indeed an excellent writer, kudos!).

But I was elated when you come back to Image Comics to unleash your BEASTS, most particularly DEADLY CLASS and Low. I'm an assistant professor in one of my country's state universities there, catering the society's poor but well-deserved types, and a true bonafide 80's guy (The Philippines had a very rough time in that decade, believe me).

So, I really, really feel connected with this DEADLY CLASS energy, particularly with Marcus, Saya, and the lovely Maria. Reading this excellent series since the beginning, especially when you mentioned FILIPINOS in one of the pages (and targets of racial stereotypes, but that's fine with me for you really love other nationalities as evidence with your Filipino collaborators, like Leinil Francis Yu, Lan Medina, and Opena). Indeed, you are the master of making us readers invested in your characters, and I was really devastated when you "killed" Marcus and Maria last story arc. But in issue #26, I felt reinvigorated, inspired to a whole different level in the midst of uncertainty and fear nowadays! Let me deduce how Maria and Marcus "survived."

For the former, that's easy for poison can either kill or simply shut down vital organs like heart and lungs for long hours, but for the latter, well, that's a tricky one for I can only think of Japan's best well secret in ninjutsu which Saya knows so well. I may be wrong, but that's fine for you can pull off any "deadly" explanation as long as the story is way so awesome! Again, I was elated, shocked and jubilant for their return. I felt like a teenager again! Thank you, Rick and Wes!

So, until Batch '91 sings a Michael Jackson song, LONG LIVE DEADLY CLASS!!!

Paul Ramos,
Philippines

We will, of course, be revealing what happened to Marcus in upcoming issues. It turns out a magical space alien grown out of the DNA of a super caveman from the future acquired a magic amulet that heals all wounds and ends all suffering. It's a crazy story, and I can't wait to tell you all about it. The title of the book will change to DEADLY GORK AND THE AMULET OF REGENERATION.

And I don't know what it is that Filipino mothers cook into the food, but the Philippines produces some damn fine artists.

And damn fine letter-writers. I'm looking at you, Paul.

Hi Rick,
Just wanted to say how DEADLY CLASS is one of the few comics I'm burning for new issues to come out. Being a Millennial who never lived through the 80s, I was surprised at how much your book resonated with me. But I guess as much as DC is grounded in the zeitgeist, the general experience of the 80s, it's also a story about outsiders and how they cope - or fail to - with a hostile environment. Boy, do I feel 'em.
As a nerdy kid raised by a single mom who was into documentaries, science textbooks, and Franco-Belgian graphic novels, I saw my fair share of misery and violence. That last item probably doesn't even compare with the shit you've seen, but the docs had to stitch up my right eye, so I guess I get my pass for the club, just not the VIP section. Anyway, I feel like your book will find an even bigger audience in the years to come. It only grows more resonant as the world is dragged kicking and screaming back into the 80s.
Good luck with the TV show and stay alive,
Eric Kron
Mainz, Germany

Thanks for writing in. I do think that you millennials were short-changed when it comes to music and entertainment, but that's probably because I'm an old man romanticizing my youth. I'm glad that the pop culture of my childhood can make its way to you via our comical book. It's nice to hear that the characters resonate with you, as we are working to try and ensure that they are identifiable to people of all ages (while

I relish in my childhood). I don't have time this month, but next month, I'll make a big list of some more music of the era.

Rick & the Incredible DEADLY CLASS Team,

Reading the absolutely beautiful work called DEADLY CLASS has come to be a nearly religious experience. In 15 years of reading comics, this is the first book to make me laugh out loud, cry over a character's death, and experience feelings of despair I literally didn't believe were possible in this or any medium.

Issue #26 has done it again, but with a twist, I never expected - the revelation the Marcus and Maria are alive filled me with such incredible HOPE that I was left stunned. Marcus's simple statement, "I'm here.", deeply resonated with me and reinforces the idea that no matter how bad things may appear, life will continue and you will be okay.

Thank you, Rick, Wes, Jordan, Rus, and Sebastian, for crafting a masterpiece.

Eternally grateful,
Ryan McGuire

I'm glad you enjoyed the twist. We've got many more to come, and all of them just as happy. In fact, we're going to change the name of the book to HAPPY HAPPY SINGSONG THE SPARKLY ADVENTURES OF RAINBOW BOY AND HIS SIDEKICK CHUCKLES. So much happy stuff coming up. Boy, oh boy.

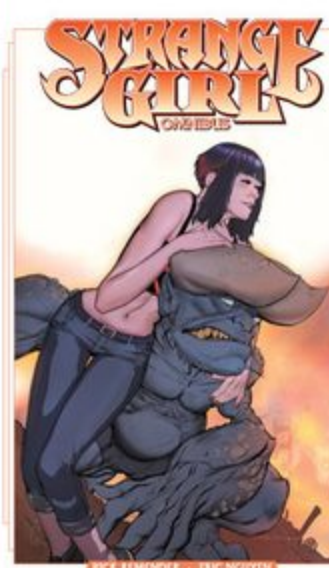
That's it for this month. I'm glad we got to finally show a little bit of Saya's backstory. She has a whole lot of other secrets to be revealed, but not anytime too soon. Too much other stuff going on back at the school we have to check in with next month!

See you then,
Rick

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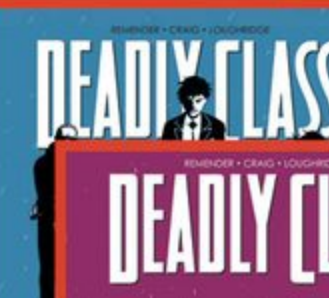
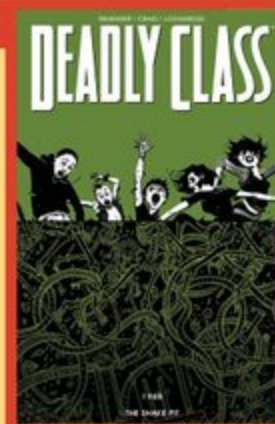
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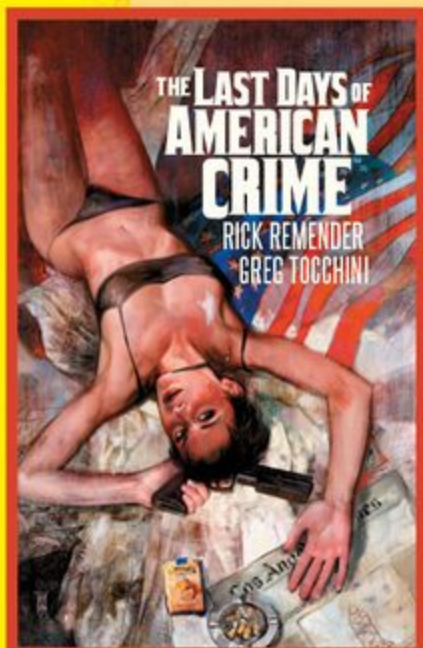
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BLACK SCIENCE



LIMITED EDITION
11 INCH STATUE

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BIN LI & SQUID KIDS INK

PRODUCED BY
GIANT GENERATOR

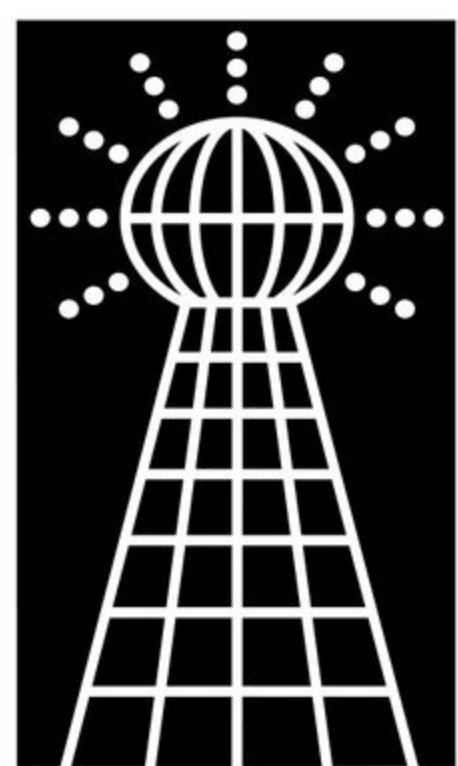
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GIANT GENERATOR™

SELF-INDULGENT MISSION STATEMENT

20 years ago, my good friend, Harper Jaten co-opted the Bad Religion song, "Generator," to use as a term to describe a person who stands up and gets to work making the thing they want to make. To be a Generator was to be a person who ignites a fuse, the inciting motivator of creation.

It can seem that the only way to get something made is to continuously knock on the door of someone of influence and power and hope that they anoint you, play advocate, and usher you onto the stage, to legitimize you. But growing up listening to punk, we were infused with a belief in something different, that there was a better road forward, to simply do it yourself.

So, way back in 1997, we got together with some friends, and we made our own comic books. We did everything. We wrote, drew, inked, Zip-a-Toned, lettered, published, and distributed them. We gave all of our free time over to making comics. And I could never stop, not one year since then; I've been making comic books for 20 solid years now.

So, you know, that's the meaning behind my new, somewhat self-congratulatory studio name, GIANT GENERATOR. It's a name that serves as a reminder of what I set out to do, of why I wanted to make my own comic books with like-minded people, of why it's important to generate in a world where most everyone prefers to parrot the songs of someone else. It's a studio focused on grabbing that initial spark, that initial moment of excitement when an idea forms, and feeding its flames – building it and creating something real out of it.

Giant Generator is a studio dedicated to collaboration, co-ownership, and innovation, to generating art and stories from unique, personal and strange sparks, to create from a place of passion, mindless of trends or the mainstream spotlight, to making the books, shows, films and toys we want to make the way we want to make them.

To **generate.**

Thank you for supporting our efforts,
Rick Remender

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COMING SOON



LOW #16

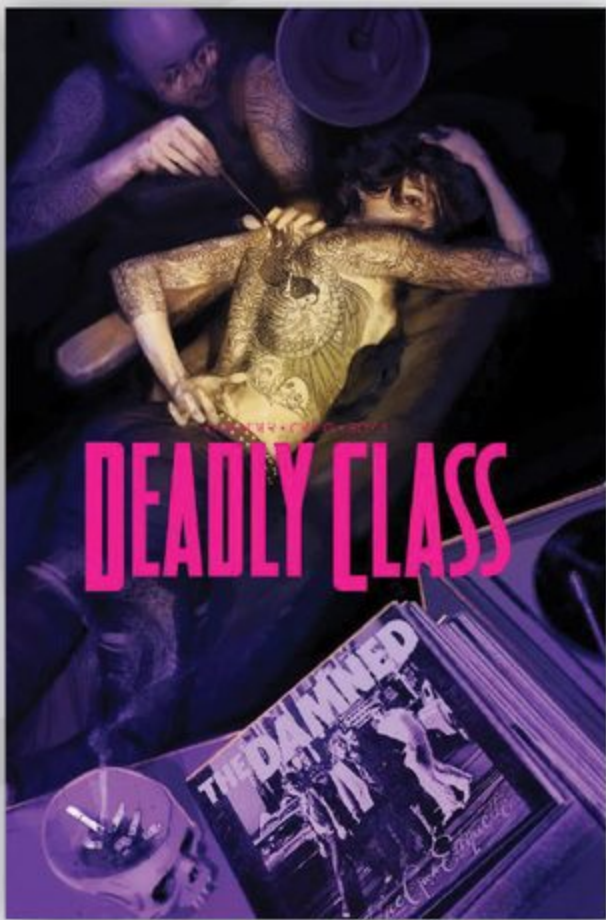
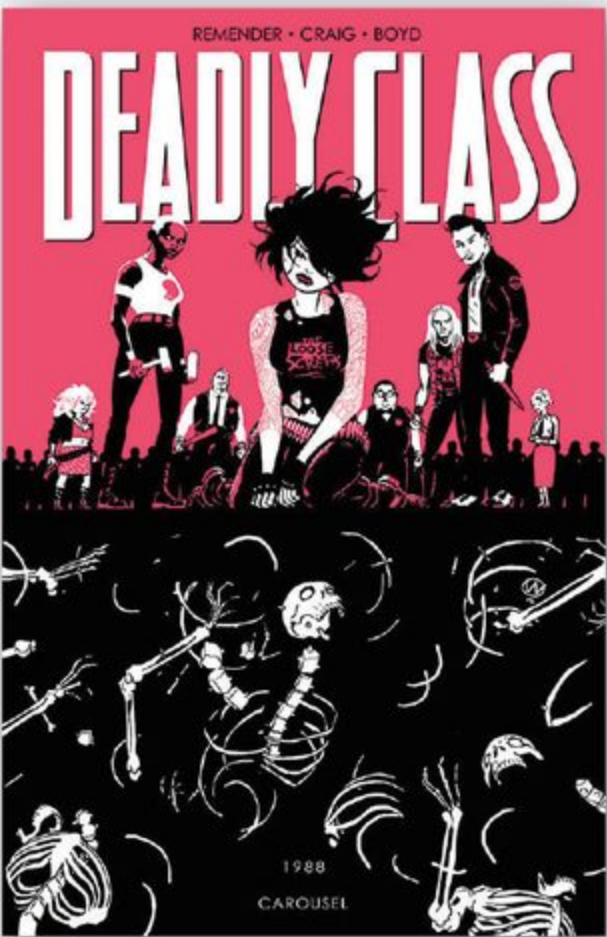
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